

Confidential. Copies for PH + HR + return for Lattimer file

1/19/72

Mr. Martin
Senator Edward Kennedy
Senate Office Bldg.
Washington, D.C.

Dear Mr. Martin,

In writing you earlier, I reported what I had been told and what I have in a clipping, that Dr. Lattimer professed doubt that Oswald was the assassin before the favor bestowed upon him by Burke Marshall. I think I neglected to give you a source so that you could, should you so desire, confirm my accuracy. One from which I quote is Roger Wetherington, in the New York Daily News of the 10th: "He added that he had had some reservations before".

I know of no case in which Dr. Lattimer ever expressed any doubt and believe that in every case he was explicit in saying there was or could be no doubt. I will now quote from the earliest of his writing. He spoke in New York City February 14, 1966 (New York State Journal of Medicine 1782ff), his topic being "Similarities in Fatal Woundings of John Wilkes Booth and Lee Harvey Oswald."

In fairness to Dr. Lattimer and to you, for I am developing an opinion based not as much on solid fact as long experience in this field, I want to begin by telling you that in what I can assess Dr. Lattimer's expressions and opinions are entirely in accord with those of the radical right, including the use of some of their standard cliches. I think you may see familiar phrasing in what follows. My central point, however, is this man's honesty, subsidiary to that being his judgement, the dependability of his non-urolological opinions, and I am beginning to wonder, his rationality on this subject.

In the caption of a picture of Oswald on page six (and of all those available he just happened to select the one widely misrepresented by right extremists as showing Oswald giving a Communist salute whereas he was displaying handcuffs), these are the words of the man not persuaded Oswald was the assassin until now: "Lee Harvey Oswald, enemy (Communist) sympathizer, who shot President Kennedy..."

Dr. Lattimer has a fondness for footnotes he does not indulge in the second quotation, again a pattern in this kind of meaningless unattributed attribution that is invention: "While both shootings may well have been the actions of excited men in attacking what they considered to be a national enemy, there are many sophisticated observers who regard this point of view as unduly naive. [Not only are not "many", but not a single one of these "sophisticated observers" is named. What Dr. Lattimer might consider sophisticated in politics or observation seems increasingly more like that of Robert Welch than the late President.] They believe that both accused presidential [sic] assassins were active enemy sympathizers (Booth for the Confederacy and Oswald for the Communists),^{23, 24} and since both shootings took place during an era of large-scale undercover operations, psychological persuasion, philosophic rivalry, and intelligence activity, that both men may have been silenced as part of a larger design."

Would you care to consider that the "period" described by these "sophisticates" could be almost any period in history.